The NEW PLAYS

"Mr. Hamlet of Broadway" a Near-Tragedy.

BY CHARLES DARNTON.

EDDIE FOY'S Hamlet is like Beerbohm Tree's—funny without being vulgar. It will not go down in history, not even comic history, perhaps, but it will probably be framed and given a place of honor in New Rochelle. While it may not be a picture of poetic beauty and princely dignity, it's a very good tintype.

'Tis a pretty thing! In "Mr. Hamlet of Broadway," at the Casino, Mr. Foy looks like the real Shakespearian goods. That he doesn't deliver the goods is not his fault. After he had taken his Shakespeare straight and become intoxicated with the melancholy that caused his poetic soul to cry out for an "opening" on Broadway, sordid despots of the theatre robbed him of his noble ambition. But they could not steal his dinky cloak, good mother.

In the near-tragedy at the Casino Mr. Foy dresses according to the best traditions. "The trappings and the suits of woe" are all there, and so far as appearances go Hamlet is on the job to do and die.

But alas, poor Foy! He asked for Shakespeare and they gave him Edgar Smith. And Smith has given him this sort of thing:

"Nay, good mother, there's a greater Dane than Hamlet—if you don't believe it ask Joe Gans." Your fancy turns to the sporting page with a two-column cut of Battling Nelson. How now, my lord? You search the face of Foy only to find it true to Shakespeare. There is that within which passeth Smith.

"Screams, madam? I know not screams." This Hamlet doesn't want to be a "scream." Under the silliness of Smith he is serious. He has the face to tell you this. It is a regulation Shakespearian face. Nothing can shake its serious purpose. Oh, the tragedy of the comedian who yearns to play Hamlet! Only Willie Collier knows it not. He has declared he could play Shakespeare and get more laughs than Nat Goodwin, but he has never proved it.

Now, Eddie Foy is tired of "laughs." He has been getting them for so many years that he would like to get something else for a change. But Broadway is a hard master. It yells for "laughs." When Mr. Foy first announced that he was going to play Hamlet according to Shakespeare frivolous Broadway thought it was going to get the laugh of its life. But it got left. By deciding that Edgar Smith is funnier than Shakespeare the Shuberts have taken the sad case of Foy into their own hands.

Eddie Foy as Hamlet.

You see Foy tearing whole pages out of "Hamlet" as he "gets up" in the part. He is a stranded circus clown who is willing to do anything for money, and so he agrees to play Hamlet for the edification of witless campers in the Adirondacks.

Edgar Smith has treated these amateurs in an amateurish way. His burlesque is a near-tragedy. Foy might have made it deadly by following the author's cue, but he doesn't. He has gone about his work with a solemnity that saves it from becoming hopelessly cheap in the eyes of the audience. Miss Maude Raymond, on the other hand, plays Ophelia with vegetables that suggest a use for garden truck outside of the kitchen. At the same time she is funny in a reckless way.

Maude Raymond as Ophelia.

Miss Raymond doesn't do all her singing as Ophelia. She uses several dialects in "Good-Bye, Molly Brown," and uses her own wiggles in "The Dusky Salome." A Salome chorus spares your blushes, if not your ears, by dressing above the vaudeville level, but the girls who help out Miss Laura Guerite in "The Hornpipe Rag" might be given a few rags for Christmas and still not be overburdened with clothes.

A small soubrette named Daphne Pollard wears a voice that seems about two sizes too large for her, but nothing apparently can wear it out. The same songs keep coming back in desperation, and before the evening is over you get a little too much of them. Whenever "Mr. Hamlet of Broadway" gets hard up for something to do out comes a song.

Mr. Foy occasionally gets away from Mr. Smith's dull book by seizing upon a song, and like Mr. Hopper at the Majestic Theatre he finally turns to nursery rhymes that seem a trifle "advanced" for the kiddies who crowd around him. He has to wait until the second act before he can play Hamlet. But let him be of good Christmas cheer—some actors have to wait a lifetime for Hamlet to come their way.

A Queer Model.

THE suffragette bazaar in London has attracted many visitors to see a model of a Holloway jail cell, which is faithful in all details, even to the prisoner in correct prison uniform.

Queens and Typewriters.

IT is reported that Queen Alexandra of England, Queen Maude of Norway, the Czarina and the Queen of Portugal are all fond of using the typewriter in corresponding with their intimates.

The Greatest Labor of Love, Says

"THERE!" exclaimed the Widow, with a glad little sigh, as she dropped her last package onto the piano and sank wearily into the armchair before the fire. "That's settled!"

HELEN ROWLAND

"What's settled?" inquired the Bachelor eagerly. "That you WILL have me or that you WON'T"—

"The GREAT QUESTION, Mr. Travers," interrupted the Widow coldly, drawing off her gloves and stretching her patent leather toes toward the fender. "The question that makes life hideous for every woman during six weeks of the year—the question of what to give a man for Christmas!"

"Oh!" The Bachelor sat down on the opposite side of the fire with an expression of relief. "I thought you were going to say the question of Capital."

"It is," declared the Widow bitterly, "and of Labor. It's the most harrowing problem"—

"It isn't half so harrowing," broke in the Bachelor quickly, "as the problem of what he will do with it when he gets it."

"What!" The Widow sat up with a little start.

"Well," explained the Bachelor, shifting nervously in his chair, "a chap can't conscientiously wear out thirteen pairs of slippers every season, nor gracefully perform physical impossibilities on a pipe that won't draw, nor cheerfully face sudden death by smoking dark blue cigars, nor persuade himself that he is yearning for a china cupid with a gilt basket on its back or an ink well covered with turtle doves. A woman's painful effort to decide what to give a man is beside his painful effort to discover how to get rid of it like a mild case of indigestion beside a raging toothache. Of course," he continued, thoughtfully lighting a cigarette, "it is always easy to pawn"—

The Widow jumped.

"I mean to pretend to use a thing," went on the Bachelor hurriedly. "But why is it a woman never exercises any originality or even common sense in choosing a Christmas present for a man?"

"Because," exclaimed the Widow, bringing her patent leather toes petulantly down upon the fender, "buying a present for a man is exactly like taking a chance in the grab-bag at a charity fair. There's no possible way of telling how it will turn out. Send him something cheap and he despises you; spend your last penny to get him something very handsome and he wonders if he hasn't been giving you too much encouragement. Send him something noncommittal, and he considers you stupid and commonplace; try to be original and get him something with a little personal significance in it and he shudders for fear you are becoming sentimental. It takes more diplomacy to find something which he will appreciate and which at the same time won't look like a burnt offering at his shrine than to ward off a war with China. Steering your way between his sensitiveness and his egotism is like steering between Scylla and Charybdis—you are bound to founder on one or the other unless you confine yourself to the beaten path"—

"Which is strewn with slippers and cigarette cases and photograph holders and dressing gowns!" broke in the bachelor with a sigh. "But," and he lightly touched the package lying on the piano, "the man for whom you bought this—is he a—a near and dear friend."

"Oh," the Widow glanced at the Bachelor through half-closed lids, "very near—and very dear."

The Bachelor started.

"Is he—er—short or tall?" he asked warily.

"Just—about your height," answered the Widow, looking over the Bachelor casually.

"Old or young?" pursued the Bachelor determinedly.

"Well," the Widow pursed her lips calculatingly, "I should say that he was middle-aged."

The Bachelor winced.

"Is it—is it a gilt prayer-book?" he inquired with a pathetic glance at the package.

The Widow shook her head.

"Or a cut-glass whiskey flask?"

"I should say not!" exclaimed the Widow in a voice as tragic as the situation at the end of the second act. "It's for a NICE man, Mr. Travers."

The Bachelor brightened and reached for the package.

"Won't you let me open it now?" he pleaded plaintively, "and—and end the suspense."

"Open—what?" inquired the Widow in astonishment.

"My junk—I mean my present."

The Widow buried her face in her hands and laughed softly.

"YOUR present!" she exclaimed between breaths. "That isn't your present. It's for—THE OTHER MAN! But you can have yours this minute if you want it," and she reached behind the piano and brought out a flat leather box.

"There!" she cried, taking a cut glass and silver flask from its satin lining. "Isn't it a perfectly beautiful—BAY RUM BOTTLE?" and in her excitement she stepped deliberately under the mistle-toe trimmed chandelier.

"After all," she added, "there ARE some things which would appeal to any man!"

"Yes!" exclaimed the Bachelor enthusiastically, catching her where she stood. "Widows, for instance, and flasks, and YOU—and this!" and with a laugh of triumph he leaned over and took the favorite masculine Christmas present.

The Widow,

By Helen Rowland

Their Christmas Dreams.

HE.

FIRE of the holly, milk-white mistletoe,
Like the lips of Polly and her heart of snow.
Wonder if I dare tell her how I love her?
Kiss her standing there where you hang above her?
Oh, it is delightful to sit and dream like this;
Dream the whole long night full of Polly's Christmas kiss!
Will she be unwilling? Put the thought to rout
Till my pipe needs filling and my fire is out!

SHE.

I SHALL hang the holly and the mistletoe
Even though it's folly—though he may not know!
Wonder if he'll dare to kiss me standing here
In the golden glare of the chandelier?
I shall look so good and so innocent
He couldn't, though he should, know the thing was meant.
He shall never dream that the trap was set!
I may faint or scream! But he shall kiss me yet!

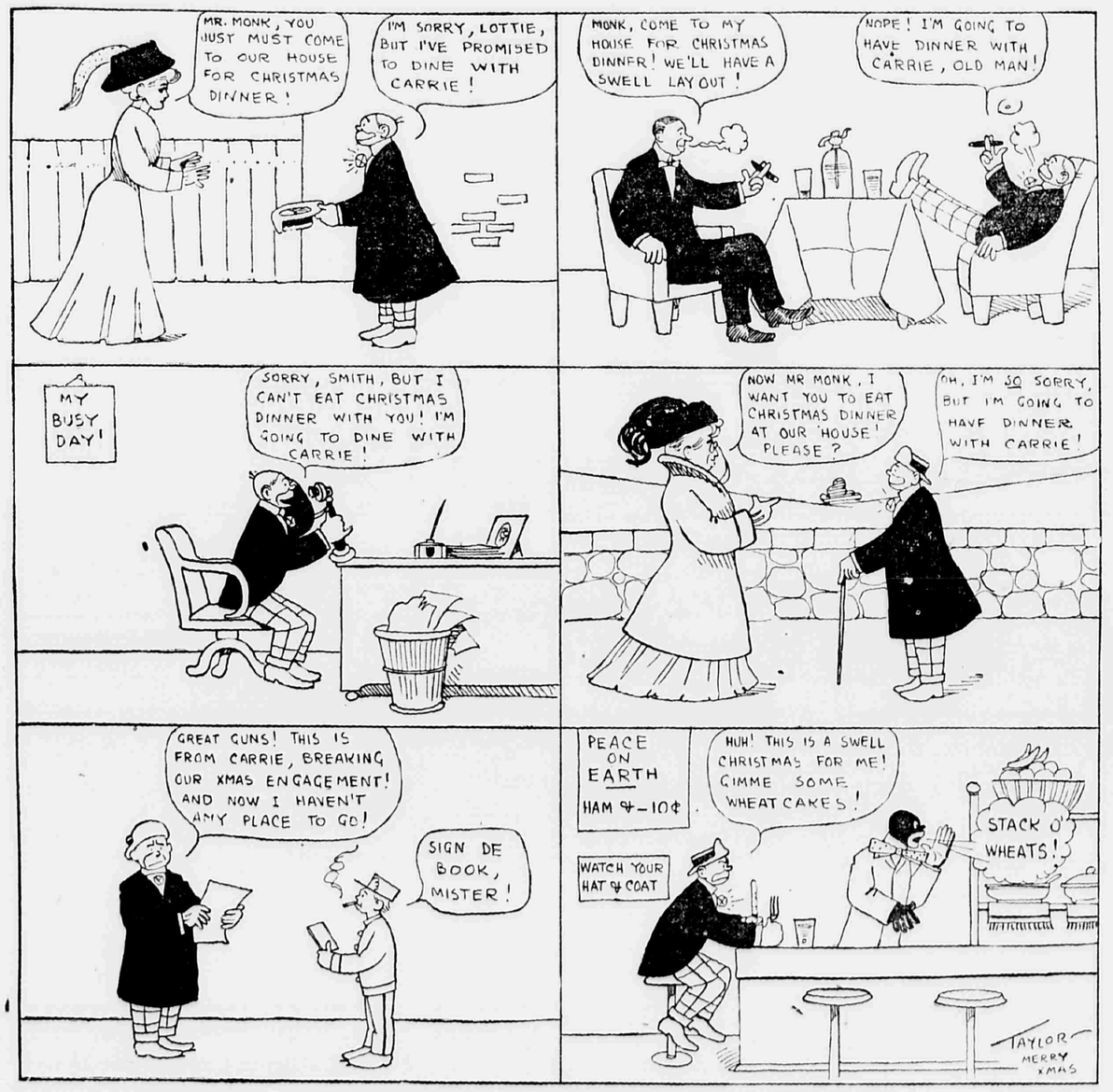
Is Buying a Christmas Gift for a Man

A Pipe That Won't Draw.

The Favorite Present.

The Million Dollar Kid's Christmas

By R. W. Taylor



Meditations of a Married Man

By Clarence L. Cullen.

NEXT to catching her husband in a whopper, a woman likes to find an overlooked price tag on a Christmas present given to her by a woman friend.

Women rarely or never take any stock in the smug, ostentatious repentance of a sister woman who has had a caloric fling at the game before settling down in sackcloth and ashes. They can't understand how anybody can be actually sorry after having had the fun. Maybe they're right.

When you take off a shoe at your office in order to hammer down a heel nail that's been torturing you, don't fail to relace the shoe exactly as it was laced before you left home in the morning. This is pretty deep and esoteric, but you'll get it after doping it for a minute.

After two glasses of cochineal Chianti at the table d'hote she begins to hum snatches from "Beautiful Land of Bohemia." you listen, toying grimly with the bread, and you marvel over the tenacity with which she and her sex in general cling to illusions.

Her idea as to New Year's resolutions is that you should swear off on everything that you enjoy in order that you may have more time and "tin" to contribute toward her enjoyment.

She never buys you a "cute" suit of pajamas that she doesn't reflect upon how much better she'd look in them in a fancy photograph than you look in them in the privacy of your bedchamber.

The gay and daring young clip of a married man who loves to see his little wife smoke a cigarette with the demitasse shouldn't kick when, later on, she begins to order 'em by the hundred or thousand.

Ever notice, when your wife's in the home poker game, how greedily she freezes on to her winnings, although, when she's unlucky, she always gazes unconcernedly out of the window when you're digging up for her losings?

After you've frisked yourself to stake her to the major part of your bankroll, "Meet me downtown," she chirps, winsomely, "and I'll treat you to lunch," and she pretends not to know that that's rubbing it in.

She loathes and detests the Mormonistic idea, of course. All the same she is secretly curious as to how a boss Mormon with a whole corral of wives contrives to keep them all goodhumored.

Ever observe how, when a woman begins to "study" theosophy, she rolls her eyes and tries to look sad and spirituelle and astral when she talks about "Charma" and "Nirvana" and things?

The New Thought Movement was never projected as an all-around obesity cure. But you'll never be able to prove this to a whole lot of fat, lethargic women who are interested in it.

We know a crafty cuss, the husband of an adipose wife, who voluntarily tells her every evening that she looks whole pounds thinner to him than when he left home in the morning. Maybe that modern Machiavelli doesn't get good home cooking!

Ever notice how she chirks up when she reads on the Women's Page that Aspasia, Cleopatra and Madame Pompadour were more captivating after passing the age of forty than they were at the giggly, bread-and-butter period of girlhood?

Whenever you hear a married woman spring that mossy old rave that the only way to get along with a husband is to "feed the brute," you can bet the bankroll either that she is too lax on the job or that she simply doesn't know how to feed a man properly.

You'll never know the meaning of sure-enough bitterness of spirit until, at bedtime, your wife pinches the nice, warm top quilt off your bed in order to spread it over and around her pet mutt on the couch.

What is the exact nature of the congenital or fundamental kink or twist in the feminine mind which causes the average woman to absolutely reject the very thought of coming to the front and owning up when she is clearly proven to be in the wrong?

When you hear a man say, "I never apologize, right or wrong," you promptly rate him as a boor and an all-around N. G. Plenty of women make the same remark, however, and get themselves admired for their "independence" and "spirit."

Yes, Etheldreda, it is distinctively a homely woman's maxim that "the way to a man's heart lies through his stomach." Pretty and amiable women know a heap differently.

Married men believe perforce in miracles. How could they help it, after comparing how their wives look before and after getting ready for an evening at the theatre?

Not That Kind.

"PLEASE let me have," the inquiry ran, "a receipt for a good Christmas pudding. Constant Reader."

And, smiling to himself, the answers to correspondents editor dipped his pen and wrote:

"Constant Reader—We will forward the receipts as soon as you send us the pudding. Many thanks."

A Romance of Mystery, Love and Adventure.

THE BLACK BAG

By Louis Joseph Vance,

Author of "The Brass Bowl," "The Private War," Etc.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING INSTALMENTS

Philip Kirkwood, a young Californian, is stranded, almost penniless, in London. He falls in with an adventurer named Calendar, whose daughter, Dorothy, wins the American's affections. Under Kirkwood's escort Dorothy goes to a deserted house by night to get for her father a mysterious black Gladstone bag hidden there. The bag contains jewels. From Mrs. Hallam, an enemy of the Calendars, Kirkwood learns that Dorothy stole them. This the American denies. Dorothy and her father, with a man named Mulready, sail from England on a brigantine called the Alethea. Mrs. Hallam follows them, to get the jewels. Kirkwood, too, goes to join them in order to protect Dorothy. He steals a catboat and sails out in a storm to the Alethea. He is dragged to the deck of the brigantine, half drowned; but learns from Stryker, the captain, that the Calendars are not aboard. The Alethea is bound for Antwerp. During the trip Stryker robs Kirkwood of all his money and jewelry. Kirkwood finds that Dorothy and Calendar have gone to Holland by another route and prepares to hunt for them there.

CHAPTER XII.

(Continued.)

Despair.

ADVANCING to the rail, the captain whistled in one of the river boats; then, while the waterman waited, faced his passenger.

"Now, yer r'yal 'ighness, wot can I do for you afore you goes ashore?"

"I think you must have forgotten," said Kirkwood quietly. "I hate to trouble you, but—there's that matter of four pounds."

Stryker's face was expressive only of mystified vacuity. "Four quid? I dunno as I know just wot you means."

"You agreed to advance me four pounds on those things of mine. * * *"

"W'y, Yer Lordship, four pounds jus' pyes yer passyge; I thought you understood."

"You scoundrel!"

Stryker's mouth closed with a snap; his features froze in a cast of wrath; cold rage glinted in his small blue eyes. "W'y," he bellowed, "you bloomin' loonatic, d'ye think you can sye that to Bill Stryker on 'is own wessel!"

He hesitated a moment, then launched a heavy fist at Kirkwood's face. Unsurprised, the young man side-stepped, caught the hard, bony wrist as the captain lurched by, following his wasted blow, and with a dexterous twist laid him flat on his back, with a sounding thump upon the deck. And as the infuriated scamp rose—which he did with a bound that placed him on his feet and in defensive posture, as though the deck had been a springboard—Kirkwood leaped back, seized a capstan bar and faced him with a challenge.

"Stand clear, Stryker!" he warned the man tensely, himself livid with rage. "If you move a step closer I swear I'll knock the head off your shoulders! Not another inch, you contemptible whelp, or I'll brain you! * * * That's better," he continued as the captain, caving, dropped his fists and moved uneasily back. "Now give that boatman money for taking me ashore. Yes. I'm going—and if we ever meet again take the other side of the way, Stryker!"

Without response, a grim smile wreathing his thin, hard lips, Stryker thrust one hand into his pocket and withdrawing a coin tossed it to the waiting waterman. Whereupon Kirkwood backed warily to the rail, abandoned the capstan bar and dropped over the side.

Nodding to the boatman, "The Steen landing—quickly," he said in French.

Stryker, recovering, advanced to the rail and waved him a derisive bon voyage.

Rapidly, as he was ferried across the busy Scheldt, the white blaze of his passion cooled; but the biting irony of his estate ate, corrosive, into his soul. Hollow-eyed he glared vacantly into space, pale lips unmoving, his features wasted with despair.

They came to the landing stage and swung broadside on. Mechanically the American got up and disembarked. As heedless of time and place he moved up the quai to the gangway and so gained the esplanade where, pausing, he thrust a trembling hand into his trouser pocket.

The hand reappeared, displaying in its outspread palm three big, round, brown British pennies. Staring down at them, Kirkwood's lips moved.

"Bed rock!" he whispered huskily.

CHAPTER XIII.

Progressive Crime.

WITHOUT warning or presage the still evening air was smitten and made softly musical by the pealing of a distant chime, calling vespers to its brothers in Antwerp's hundred belfries.

Six o'clock! Kirkwood roused out of his dour brooding. The Amsterdam express would leave at 6.32.

A public clock reassured him with the information that he had the quarter of an hour's leeway; it was only seventeen minutes past eighteen o'clock (Belgian railway time, always confusing). Inquiring his way to the Amsterdam train, which was already waiting at the platform, he paced its length, peering brazenly in at the coach windows, now warm with hope, now shivering with disappointment, realizing as he could not but realize that, all else aside, his only chance of rehabilitation lay in meeting Calendar. But in none of the coaches or carriages did he discover any one even remotely resembling the fat adventurer, his daughter, or Mulready.

It was some time later that he noticed with a casual, indifferent eye, a porter running out of the Hotel de Flandre, directly opposite, and calling a fiacre in to the carriage block.

As languidly he watched a woman, very becomingly dressed, follow the porter down to the curb.

The fiacre swung in, and the woman dismissed the porter before entering the vehicle; a proceeding so unusual that it fixed the onlooker's interest. He sat rigid with attention; the woman seemed to be giving explicit and lengthy directions to the driver, who nodded and gesticulated his comprehension.

The woman was Mrs. Hallam.

The first blush of recognition passed, leaving Kirkwood without any amazement. It was an easy matter to account for her being where she was. Thrown off the scent by Kirkwood at Sheerness, the previous morning, she had missed the day boat, the same which had ferried over those whom she pursued. Returning from Sheerness to Queensborough, however, she had taken the night boat for Flushing and Antwerp—and not without her plan, who was not a woman to waste her strength aimlessly; Kirkwood believed that she had had from the first a very definite campaign in view. In that campaign Queensborough Pier had been the first strategic move; the journey to Antwerp, apparently, the second; and the American was impressed that he was witnessing the inception of the third decided step. * * * The conclusion of this process of reasoning was inevitable: Madam would bear watching.

Thus was a magical transformation brought about. Instantaneously lassitude and vain repinings were replaced by hopefulness and energy. In a twinkling the young man was on his feet, every nerve a-thrill with excitement.

Mrs. Hallam, blissfully ignorant of this surveillance over her movements, took her place in the fiacre. The driver clucked to his horse, cracked his whip and started off at a slow trot; a pace which Kirkwood imitated, keeping himself at a discreet distance to the rear of the cab, but prepared to break into a run whenever it should prove necessary.

Such exertion, however, was not required of him. Evidently Mrs. Hallam was in no great haste to reach her destination; the speed of the fiacre remained extremely moderate; Kirkwood found a long, brisk stride fast enough to keep it well in sight.

To his way of thinking the behavior of the fiacre was quite unaccountable. Hardly had the horse paced off the length of two blocks on the Quai ere it was guided to the edge of the promenade and brought to a stop. And the driver twisted the reins round his whip, thrust the latter in its socket, turned sidewise on the box, and began to smoke and swing his heels, surveying the panorama of river and sunset with complacency—a cabby, one would venture, without a care in the world and serene in the assurance of a generous pourboire when he lost his fare. But as for the latter, she made no move; the door of the cab remained closed—like its occupant's mind, a mystery to the watcher.

Mrs. Hallam sat within. He could see her profile clearly silhouetted against the light; she was bending forward and staring fixedly out of the window across the driveway. Mentally he calculated the direction of her gaze, then moved away and followed it with his own eyes, and found himself staring at the facade of a third rate hotel. Above its roof the gilded letters of a sign, catching the illumination from below, spelled out the title of "Hotel du Commerce."

(To Be Continued.)